Introduction

Our vision for 2020 is a Wales where no child or young person is disadvantaged by poverty.

Poverty is not having enough money, clothes, play, food, support, services or other things that are needed for a healthy life.

Almost a third of children who live in Wales live in poverty.

This Child Poverty Strategy for Wales explains how we plan to tackle child poverty.

How do we measure child poverty?

We work out what the average income is for different types of families. Then if children are in a family that has less than 60% of that average, then they are in poverty.

- For a couple with two children, this low income level is £322 a week.
- For a single parent with two children, this low income level is £239 a week.

Families that have one or more parents with a job can be in poverty too.

How does poverty affect children and young people?

Growing up in poverty can make life very difficult.

Children and young people growing up in poverty may:

- have more health problems;
- not do as well at school;
- have fewer skills;
- expect less out of life;
- not get a job, or have a job that pays less and end up depending on benefits; and
- have fewer opportunities and be disadvantaged all their life.

Did you know?

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international agreement to protect children.

We agree with the UNCRC and believe that all children and young people should not be held back because of poverty.

“Children have the right to good quality health care and a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs. Children who are refugees should also enjoy these rights. The Government should help families who cannot afford this” (from Articles 22, 24, 26 and 27 of the UNCRC).
New Welsh law to reduce child poverty.

This new law means that the Welsh Assembly Government must publish a new Child Poverty Strategy – and that other authorities in Wales must do the same.

What’s been going on to reduce child poverty?

A great deal has been done over the last 10 years with half a million children across the UK being lifted out of poverty. In Wales, a number of things have happened:

2005: A Fair Future for our Children. This was a plan to make sure that families and children got the support and help they needed.

2006: Eradicating Child Poverty – Measuring Success. This set out targets for the Welsh Assembly Government to reduce child poverty and improve the education, health and housing of children and families living in poverty.

2007: The One Wales Agreement. This included a promise that the Welsh Assembly Government would do what it could to end child poverty in Wales by 2020.

A Child Poverty Expert Group was set up to give help and advice on what needs to be done to reduce child poverty in Wales.

2008: Children and Young People’s Wellbeing Monitor for Wales. This helps us check whether we are meeting our goals for reducing child poverty in Wales. The Statistics Wales website also helps us to monitor these goals.

2010: Children and Families (Wales) Measure. A new Welsh law has been introduced to reduce child poverty in Wales.

This new law means that the Welsh Assembly Government must publish a new Child Poverty Strategy – and that other authorities in Wales must do the same.
What do we want from this new Child Poverty Strategy?

1. Fewer families without jobs.
2. Better training for parents and young people to help them learn the skills that will give them better jobs.
3. The same opportunities and chances for the poorest children as for every one else.

We don’t want any child or young person to be disadvantaged by poverty.

1 Work with the UK Government to help families with children have more money.

We will:

- Keep encouraging families to claim the benefits they’re entitled to.
- Encourage the UK Government to spend more money on helping and supporting families.
- Encourage the UK Government to focus on helping parents find and keep a job, get the new skills they need and have more money for their families.
- Support advice services so that everyone can get better advice on things like training, jobs and benefits.
- Give more support to employers so that they can give better on-the-job training, raise skill levels and wages.
- Encourage more high quality, well paid jobs in Wales.
- Make it possible for families to do better financially.

2 Make sure that children living in low income families are not lacking things like a warm home, clothing and other basic needs.

We will:

- Make it easier for families to get affordable loans and help them save with banks and credit unions including through Child Trust Funds and the Saving Gateway.
- Help with debt and money advice.
- Give advice and support to families that find it difficult to pay for electric or gas to heat their homes or cook with.
- Help support people who work with families to be family friendly.
- Encourage energy companies to reduce their charges and provide help to families on low income.

We have 13 broad aims to help us reach our vision that no child or young person is disadvantaged by poverty by 2020.
3 Make it possible for parents to get a job.

We will:
• Help parents to find and keep a job.
• Support wider advertising of jobs.
• Work with employers to make jobs more flexible for parents so they can fit around things like childcare.
• Support and encourage flexible working.
• Encourage Local Employment Partnerships. This is getting people from all different organisations to work together to support jobs in their area.
• Improve childcare, including before and after school, as well as in the school holidays.

4 Provide low-income parents with the skills needed to get a job and keep it.

We will:
• Help develop the education and skills of future parents.
• Encourage community-focused schools to put on parent support groups and adult education classes.

5 Help young people take advantage of employment opportunities.

We will:
• Focus on training and making new jobs available for young people aged 18-25.

6 Support the parenting of children.

We will:
• Help support skills in parenting.
• Promote better and more joined up support for families living in poverty.
• Work with community focused schools to tackle child poverty in their areas.

7 Helping children and young people to do just as well at school.

We will:
• Give better advice, training and support for schools so they can recognise and help to tackle child poverty.
• Focus on helping future parents get an education and skills.
• Make sure there are policies and projects that help children and young people living in poverty to do just as well at school.

8 Help young people make full use of education and training.

We will:
• Boost education, training and skills for young people at risk of being not in education, employment or training (NEETs).
• Encourage the growth of community focussed schools, as they can help keep children, young people and parents involved with learning.
Reducing health differences for low income families.

We will:
• Recognise that having a job improves health and wellbeing for families.
• Improve children and young people and families' understanding of food and nutrition.
• Let parents know about the importance of diet and exercise for the whole family. 
• Keep focusing on reducing health differences for low income families.
• Deliver Our Healthy Future, the new public health strategy for Wales.

Encourage low income families to take part in cultural, sporting and leisure activities.

We will:
• Keep making it possible for low income families to use cultural places like libraries and galleries as well as sporting and leisure activities for free.
• Deliver new legal duties to provide play opportunities.

Help young people get involved and take part fully in the life of their community.

We will:
• Have a new national survey of children and young people in Wales.
• Take more action to raise the hopes and aims of children and young people living in Wales.
• Keep supporting children and young people's rights under Article 12 of the UNCRC.

Make sure that all children grow up in decent housing.

We will:
• Speed up paper work for families getting housing benefits.
• Make sure there are more good quality houses that families can afford.
• Keep focusing on child poverty housing targets. This includes reducing the number of families in temporary or overcrowded houses.
We also know that when we focus early on a child’s life then it is less likely that they will be disadvantaged by poverty and have better chances and opportunities in the future.

This Child Poverty Strategy is going to mean that a lot of people across Wales will be working together in partnership. It also has its own Delivery Plan, which sets out what the Welsh Assembly Government will do to reduce child poverty in Wales.

We hope that these 13 broad aims will help low income families and reduce child poverty across Wales.

13 Make sure that all children grow up in safe and friendly communities, where they can meet other children from different backgrounds and get on together.

We will:

• Make sure that all children grow up in safe, happy, friendly communities.
• Support people who feel like they are on the outside of the community that they live in (including low income families) so that they can get involved and take part in community life.

These families include:

• those with disabled children;
• those with disabled parents;
• young carers;
• minority ethnic groups; and
• Looked After Children.

Some families need support to get out of living in poverty.
Thank you for taking the time to read this,
If you want to know more, please get in touch with us:

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